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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Harrison Salisbury reflects

TO THE REVIEW:

As I read the review of *Without Fear or Favor* (CJR, July/August) by my former *Times* colleague Mary Breasted, I was bothered by a sense of *déjà vu*, but it was not until I had reflected a bit that I realized which particular ghost she had stirred. It was the ghost of *Pravda*.

Over the long years I have often read of myself in *Pravda*: "Even the savagely anti-Soviet scribbler Harrison Salisbury is *compelled to admit* [my italics] that the Soviet Union has achieved a steel production of X million tons," or "Even the chauvinist capitalist apologist Salisbury was forced to report from Hanoi that the U.S. is bombing the Vietnamese capital."

There are many such formulations in Mary Breasted's review, but perhaps the most striking is her assertion that "as Salisbury himself points out" *The Washington Post* was consistently ahead of the *Times* on Watergate. Indeed, Salisbury did point that out. Moreover, he emphasized it and he went to considerable lengths to analyze the "deferential attitude toward power," which she cites, and other factors, some of them simply accidental, which caused *The New York Times* to run No. 2.

Breasted suggests that I believe "that the *Times* deserves credit for bringing Nixon down." I have made no such assertion nor do I believe either *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* brought the president down. Nixon brought himself down. The point I tried to make was that Pentagon accelerated the creation of an apparatus and a psychology within the White House which led to Watergate and the "White House horrors." And the Supreme Court in Pentagon reinforced the press legally and psychologically to pursue Watergate with vigor. In this setting, as I wrote, the magnificent team of Woodward and Bernstein worked their magic.

Finally, I devote 196 pages of a 591-page text to relentless pursuit of the interconnections between the CIA and *The New York Times*. This took eighteen months of uninterrupted digging and it unearthed major revelations in the area of perversion of the press by the agency. There are still some fuzzy edges and probably always will be, although I have not myself given up on the inquiry; it will go on so long as I have the breath to ask questions. To dismiss this with a contemptuous shrug tells me something I do not like to know concerning the parameters of Mary Breasted's critical standards. I have not been able to uncover any leftovers of CIA linkage in "the new" *New York Times*. But if she or anyone possesses such evidence, it would be very much in the public interest to step forward and present it.

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